

Menai Dist. Physiotherapy & Sports Injury Centre

Get set to hit the slopes this winter

Winter 2008 is here, which will see many people head to the snow for a well earned break. While skiing comes naturally to some, some spend most of their time unsuccessfully negotiating with the equipment and terrain. Whatever your level of experience, skiing can be hazardous and contribute to injury.

For many amateurs, preparing for the annual week in the snow involves nothing more than finding the right ski gear, getting accommodation and ski passes, throwing the snow chains in the boot and heading off. But it makes sense to give at least some thought to your fitness before putting your body through a week of such rigorous exercise, especially if your level of activity for the rest of the year is fairly minimal. Fitter skiers tend to have fewer accidents and are less likely to wake up on day two feeling sore and worse for wear.

We can help!

The physiotherapists in our practice can help. We can ensure that you are prepared for the slopes by minimising your injury risk through specific exercise programs, fitness regimes, strengthening and warm up, stretching and cool down techniques.

To avoid injury this snow season the physiotherapists in our practice recommend you:

Be fit to ski: Incorporate ski specific exercises into your regular exercise routine prior to your holiday. This will promote use of the muscles and joints required for skiing. Strengthen the muscles specific to snow sports (thighs, butts, core stabilisers and triceps) to reduce the risk of injury and increase your enjoyment and endurance on the slopes. We can outline ski specific exercises whilst prescribing a conditioning program to improve your core stability and muscle strength. Ultimately, your performance on the ski slopes relies on your fitness, so talk to us about how to achieve an optimal fitness level.

Look after your back: When travelling distances to reach the mountain, rest every two hours and stretch. See one of our physiotherapists for effective stretching advice.

Warm up, stretch and cool down: Before hitting the slopes, warm up like you would with any other sporting activity. Stretch your thigh, calf and arm muscles. Start your day with easy runs to loosen up. (Make sure you also do this after each rest break). Once you have finished skiing for the day, remember to cool down. These activities will better prepare your body to avoid injury. We can show you warm up, stretching and cool down techniques.

Ski within your capabilities: Beginners should take advantage of a ski lesson and not succumb to the pressure of keeping up with experienced skiers. Don't be afraid to rest when you find yourself getting tired. And remember, the more unfit you are, the more tired you will become.

We can help you prepare a fitness program designed for preparing your body for the ski season, which will include cardiovascular fitness, strength and stretching. To avoid injury on the snowfields this winter, consult one of our physiotherapists on how to best prepare your body and ensure your holiday is injury-free!

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Finding motivation in winter

How to work out when it's cold outside

The key to staying motivated in winter is to change your workout routine — include as much variety as possible! Don't let cold weather sidetrack your exercise routine. Get creative!

Below are some ideas to help you stay on track this winter:

- See your physiotherapist: Come visit the physiotherapists in this practice for recommended exercises that are designed specifically for you to keep motivation during winter and to achieve your desired level of fitness. We will also give you advice on how to go about the follow through with the following ideas —
- Join a health club: they're a great place for meeting people and getting fit.
- Find an indoor pool: water aerobics is one of the best things you can do to lose weight and tone your whole body.
- Hit a sauna: get really warm and sweat out your toxins!
- Go skiing: want a toned bottom and thighs? Get a group of people together and head to the snowfields for a weekend.
- Jog or walk: you can still go for your weekly run, just do it sensibly. Drink plenty of fluids, go with the wind, do a proper warm-up, layer your clothing and wear reflective clothes in poor light.
- Take the stairs: if you live near a shopping centre, or work in a high-rise, consider them your personal gym. Walking up and down several flights of stairs for as little as 20 minutes will give you a winter wonder body in no time.

How can the physiotherapists in this practice help?

We can recommend exercises that are designed specifically for you to keep motivation during winter and to achieve your desired level of fitness. The more you repeat and become aware of an activity, the easier it becomes. Our practice looks at types of exercises/activities, specific workloads, durations of activities/sessions and intensity guidelines and can devise a plan to help you achieve your target fitness level during these winter months. Exercising and staying healthy can be a hard enough task for some of us at the best of times, and now we have to find the motivation to choose something healthy and 'light' for lunch and get out there exercising when it's dark and cold outside. Let's face it, being 'good' in winter can be hard, but the reality is that it's even more important to exercise and eat well in the cooler months. Not only will your body be better equipped to fight off colds, but you'll be ahead of the game when the summer season rolls around again and it's time to hit the beach.

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